

This is the time of year when students are back in school and starting a new academic year. What would the equivalent be for you, a transplant recipient? Possibly going back to school yourself or returning to work. Post-transplant, you are educated on the infection risks that you may come across in your daily lives. Often, we are asked by patients prior to their transplant about how to stay healthy and safe when back at work.

## Recovery period

The recovery period after a transplant is unique to each and every patient. One commonality is that it takes time for patients to recover and feel “normal” again. Fatigue is frequently a major factor with recovery, so it is important to start slow when getting back to your daily routine. The American Kidney Fund states most are able to return to normal activities within a month after the transplant.

Sometimes we get asked by patients if there are things that can help move the recovery period along. For the first few months after a transplant, physical movement that is not too strenuous is highly recommended. Gentle, easy movements (such as walking) help with blood circulation, help prevent the risk of blood clots, improve mental health, reduce fatigue, and help accelerate the recovery period. When this is paired with a healthy diet and balanced nutrition, the success of your transplant is maximized.

## Returning to work

The first 6 months after a transplant are known to be a time frame where there is a higher risk of infection. It is important to understand your limitations – physically and medically.

Reducing your infection risk starts with you. It is important to maintain good hand hygiene, have a supply of sanitizing products available, wear face masks, and maintain regular contact with your transplant team regarding how you feel and any possible infection exposure.

Once your doctors have cleared you to return to work, it is important to remember it will still take time to readjust to your work routine. You should speak with your HR department to discuss what can be done at your office to provide a safe work environment to help minimize your infection risk but also enable you to work efficiently.

## Infection risks at work

Infections are caused by pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. The specific infection risks are unique to every job, though most are often due to bacteria and/or fungi. Fungi (such as mold) are commonly found in soil, debris, drywall, and plant life. Bacteria are commonly found in sewage, plant life, raw meat, and stagnant water.

There are various ways to decrease your risk of exposure at work. This can include maintaining good personal hygiene, PPE, and work accommodations. Some jobs have a higher infection risk than others. It is important to speak with your transplant center to determine the best plan to ensure a safe return to work.

The table below shows common health risks associated with various jobs and ways to minimize your risk of acquiring an infection.

Activity	Health risk	Prevention methods
Inspection / electrical work	Minimal	Normal precautions
Teaching / day care	Respiratory infections	Avoid close contact Face masks* Handwashing Avoid touching face / eyes / mouth
Painting / mechanical work	Inhaling solvents	Ventilation
Construction	Inhaling fungus	Face masks*
Gardening / landscaping	Inhaling fungus Fungal infections from scratches	Face masks* Gloves Handwashing
Sanitation / sewage	Bacterial infections Inhaling fungus	Face masks* Gloves Handwashing
Live animals / raw meat	Bacterial infections Infected bites or scratches	Face masks* Gloves Handwashing

\*Fitted N95 masks are most effective

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*This section of our monthly newsletter will focus on support and resources offered both by the Organ Transplant Center and throughout the nation. Please utilize these as you need them and reach out with any questions.*

**Kidney and Pancreas: 319-356-1136**

**Heart: 319-356-1028**

**Liver: 319-356-1137**

**Lung: 319-356-2016**

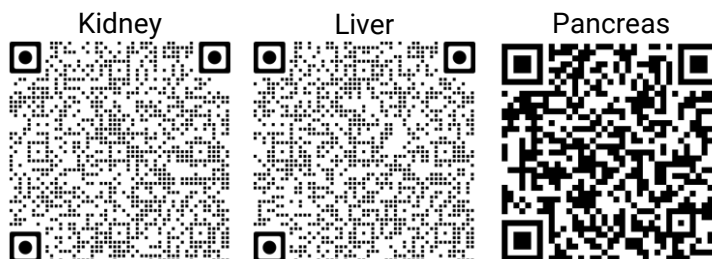
## Medicare and Transplant

Medicare eligibility is based on age, disability, having end-stage kidney failure, or receiving a kidney transplant. No other organ transplant or need for organ transplant qualifies one for Medicare. There is a 1-year enrollment window for Medicare from date of kidney transplant. Delaying enrollment can increase chances of higher out-of-pocket expenses for anti-rejection medication. Medicare Advantage plans cover anti-rejection medications, and out-of-pocket expenses are subject to plan.

\* For further questions or coverage changes, please contact the Organ Transplant Center Financial Counselors.

## Video Resources

The Organ Transplant Center has put together videos to better explain the transplant evaluation process and provide additional patient education. Please scan the QR codes below to access these videos.



## Organ Transplant Support Group

The UI Health Care Organ Transplant Center hosts a hybrid support group every other month – in-person and by Zoom. Each group is focused on a specific topic with speakers followed by time for discussion. If you have any questions, please contact 319-467-8385.

**Location:**

Iowa Donor Network  
550 Madison Avenue  
North Liberty, IA 52317

**Date:**

October 9, 2025

**Speaker:** UI Health Care  
dietitian

**Zoom Information:**

Meeting ID: 937 1836 1285  
Passcode: 642907

## Additional Resources

Social Security Disability

- [Adult Disability Starter Kit](#)
- [SSI Child Disability Starter Kit](#)

National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC): [How to Apply](#)

Iowa Anatomical Gift Fund: [Application](#)

Iowa Donor Network / Writing Your Donor Family:  
<https://www.iowadonornetwork.org/transplant-recipients/writing-your-donor-family>

University of Iowa Telepsychology Training Clinic offers free, short-term counseling to Iowans with limited access to mental health care.

- [Click here](#) to see if you qualify